

Amendment to the Claims

1. (currently amended) An interface device for a computer, the interface device connectable to a network, ~~a computer~~ and a storage unit, the storage unit including a disk drive, the interface device comprising:

a sequencer including a hardware logic circuit configured to process a transport layer header of a network packet,

a memory adapted to store control information regarding a network connection being handled by said device, and

a mechanism for associating said packet with said control information and for selecting whether to process said packet by said computer or to send data from said packet to the storage unit, thereby avoiding the computer.

2. (original) The interface device of claim 1, further comprising a SCSI controller connectable to the storage unit.

3. (original) The interface device of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of network ports, wherein one of said network ports is connectable to the storage unit.

4. (original) The interface device of claim 1, further comprising a Fibre Channel controller connectable to the storage unit.

5. (original) The network interface device of claim 1, further comprising a RAID controller connectable to the storage unit.

6. (original) The network interface device of claim 1, further comprising a file cache adapted to store said data.

7. (original) The network interface device of claim 1, further comprising a file cache adapted to store said data under control of a file system in the ~~host~~ computer.

8 - 20 (canceled)

21. (new) An interface device for a computer, the interface device connectable to a network and a storage unit, the storage unit including a disk drive, the interface device comprising:

- a receive mechanism that processes a Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) header of a network packet,
- a memory storing a combination of information describing an established TCP connection, and
- a processing mechanism that associates said packet with said information and selects whether to process said packet by said computer or to send data from said packet to the storage unit, thereby avoiding the computer.

22. (new) The interface device of claim 21, further comprising a SCSI controller connectable to the storage unit.

23. (new) The interface device of claim 21, further comprising a plurality of network ports, wherein one of said network ports is connectable to the storage unit.

24. (new) The interface device of claim 21, further comprising a Fibre Channel controller connectable to the storage unit.

25. (new) The network interface device of claim 21, further comprising a RAID controller connectable to the storage unit.

26. (new) The network interface device of claim 21, further comprising a file cache adapted to store said data.

27. (new) The network interface device of claim 21, further comprising a file cache adapted to store said data under control of a file system in the computer.

28. (new) A method for operating an interface device for a computer, the interface device connectable to a network and a storage unit, the storage unit including a disk drive, the method comprising:

receiving, by the interface device from the network, a packet containing data and a Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) header,
processing, by the interface device, the TCP header,
storing, on the interface device, information regarding a TCP connection,
associating, by the interface device, the packet with the TCP connection,
and

selecting, by the interface device, whether to process the packet by the computer or to send the data from the packet to the storage unit, thereby avoiding the computer.

29. (new) The method of claim 28, further comprising creating, by the computer, the information regarding the TCP connection.

30. (new) The method of claim 28, wherein the interface device includes a network port, and the packet is received via the port and the data is sent to the storage unit via the port.

31. (new) The method of claim 28, wherein the interface device includes first and second network ports, and the packet is received via the first port and the data is sent to the storage unit via the second port.

32. (new) The method of claim 28, further comprising storing the data on a file cache of the interface device.

33. (new) The method of claim 28, further comprising adding a network protocol header to the data for sending the data to the storage unit.